

# CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

*A Christian Journal of Opinion*

## Impressions of North Africa\*

A neglected area in American thinking on world affairs has been the Moghreb or North African world, which includes Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and, generally speaking, Libya. Not until recently, with the withdrawal of French authority, have Americans felt free to establish friendly cultural and social links within the area. North Africans welcome these ties, for they see themselves as a bridge between the Arab and Western worlds. However, their long and painful course toward independence and the uncertainty they share with every Arab government predisposes them to an attitude of caution and calculated reserve which is quite understandable. Their will to cooperate stops at the threshold of any new form of domination. If American policy-makers are wise, they will welcome this point of view, especially with Lebanon fresh in the public mind. (Public declarations of support for American policies and doctrines proved a political liability to the Chamoun Government and doubtless contributed to its undoing.)

Indeed, North Africa is attractive not primarily because of occasional professions of friendliness to the West, though these attitudes are important especially as they express underlying values that are shared in common—values, incidentally, which a few shipments of arms or wheat can never create

\* These impressions are based on a recent visit to North Africa before Tunisia had broken diplomatic relations with Egypt. They reflect the attitudes of North Africans upon joining the Arab League—attitudes which temporarily, at least, have been altered in recent days.

*ex nihilo*. Rather, these countries stand out because of their struggle to establish and maintain free and stable political regimes in one of the most troubled areas of the world.

Tunisia is a republic, Morocco a constitutional monarchy; both seek to carry out social revolution under the most trying circumstances. It is as if the New Deal had been forced to pursue its reforms while outside forces sought to exploit every shortcoming to overthrow and replace the regime. Many are pessimistic that the burden will prove too great, but the challenge is a spur of the kind that made our own founding fathers dedicate themselves untiringly to their task.

On September 8, President Bourguiba and his Council announced Tunisia's decision to join the Arab League. Had this decision not been made, only Tunisia would have remained outside this important body. Bourguiba and the able, enthusiastic young men who surround him are convinced they can play a positive role within the Arab League. They see themselves as a possible mediator or honest broker, much in the manner of Britain under Disraeli. They will not hesitate to act as spokesman for the Moghreb. Hand and hand with Morocco and, eventually, Algeria, they will defend its interests. Beyond this they envisage clusters of common interests emerging with the Sudan, Libya and, in the long run, Iraq and other Arab states. It was not by accident that, during the first week in September, the Iraqi Foreign Minister

visited Tunis with an offer of support for a Tunisian seat on the Security Council. There are straws in the wind that indicate Iraq's desire to retain a free hand in its dealings with the U.A.R.

All this is not to say that these various Arab states see their goals and objectives as far removed from Nasser's as some Americans tend to see them. The new governments in Iraq and Lebanon assuredly will be more friendly to Egypt than their predecessors. Equally they avow their intention of not being subservient to any one Arab state. Even in North Africa responsible leaders accept the proposition that Nasser has launched a social revolution. They believe that his and their regimes are popular governments as, for example, pre-revolutionary governments in Iraq and Egypt were not. They doubt that Nasser's expansionist aims are unlimited.

If they have a single all-powerful reservation, it concerns his attitude toward the West. The feeling runs deep that Nasser does not understand the West. Here perhaps North Africans can serve world peace by interpreting the West to the rest of the Arab world. This would scarcely be a totally new undertaking, for from ancient times North Africa has been a bridge linking and reconciling the values and claims of what they describe as the Occident and the Orient.

Thus Arab North Africa (*Al Maghrib al 'Arabi*), an area itself in major historical transition and included on few American foreign policy agendas until lately, may play an increasingly vital role in our thinking. Libya, which is neither fully North African nor Middle Eastern, received its independence in 1952, Morocco and Tunisia in 1956. Algeria, which began its four-year-old revolution in November of 1954, is both the geographic and political pivot of the region.

The political destiny of the area is inextricably bound up with some form of Algerian solution. Failing this, the gradual infusion of allied forces into the area seems inevitable. Perhaps an answer can be found within an emerging North African federation drawing strength from a commonwealth relation with France. Economic progress and development plans for the Sahara could go forward within such an association. Thanks to the French, the area is only partly an underdeveloped area. It has roads, communications and shining new buildings. While its natural resources reveal deficiencies in certain areas, its foremost economic

problem is the human one of training experts to man its economy. If the political problem yields to fair and acceptable adjustments, many present difficulties will fall into line. That is why the creative role North Africa can play hangs largely on events of the next few months in Paris.

K. W. T.

## THE DEPTH OF THE DIFFERENCE

FRANK PRICE'S article in this issue presents the facts about the new journal, *Christianity Today*. These facts raise some very serious questions. The journal seems to be very widely read and, making allowance for the large proportion of subsidized subscriptions, it is apparently a considerable force in American Protestantism. Yet the points of view that it represents are opposed to the dominant trends in Protestant theological schools and in the religious and intellectual leadership of the major Protestant denominations. It is doubtful that the influence of the journal represents primarily the "third force" that Henry P. Van Dusen emphasizes, the new and quite powerful sects of which he has written in these pages ("The Challenge of the 'Sects,'" July 21).

*Christianity Today* represents a highly literate conservatism. It points to a profound division within American Protestantism that is not reflected in the present ecclesiastical divisions. To the editors of *Christianity Today*, the Gospel, the Bible, the Church and the world seem very different from what they do to editors of *Christianity and Crisis* and *The Christian Century*. *Christianity Today* is irenic in spirit, as Dr. Price says, and perhaps the depth of the difference is not clear until one reads the kind of over-all view of the position that comes out in his article. This difference extends from the issue of the authority of the Bible to such matters as federal housing and policies regarding Taiwan and Communist China. Why should all these opinions on so many subjects be held together as orthodox Christianity?

The concessions that are made to the results of decades of critical study of the Bible are as slight as the concessions made to the critics of the capitalism of a generation ago. In spite of religious criticisms of the United States as a pagan nation, there are very few relevant social criticisms of American social conservatism. Month after month, almost half of the American clergy apparently

read this interpretation of the world as it appears to prosperous white Americans. No wonder the editors fear the ecumenical movement.

It may seem needlessly harsh to use the word, "white." But *Christianity Today*, while it is in favor of a racially open church and is representative of moderate opinion on the race issue, insists that integration must be voluntary. But how can the minority race engage in voluntary integration in the public schools unless the majority race is compelled by law to make some concessions?

After these things have been said we desire to emphasize the constructive spirit of *Christianity Today*, its freedom from unfair polemics and its objectivity in reporting news.

J. C. B.

## DEMOCRACY AND 'THE PEOPLE'

**T**HE *NEW York Times*, in a routine news story, recently reported that over 80 per cent of the mail received by the State Department had been critical of the Eisenhower-Dulles stand on the defense of Quemoy. This is the kind of information that one would assume the public has a right to know about.

And yet Mr. Nixon was "shocked" that the State Department had released information implying that public sentiment was not squarely behind the President and Secretary of State. He said, not off the cuff but in a prepared statement, that the release of the news was "the patent and deliberate effort of a State Department subordinate to undercut the Secretary of State and sabotage his policy." These are strong words, and we are more than a little disturbed by them. When a Vice-President defines a difference of opinion within a democracy as "sabotage," it is time to reconsider just what democracy is all about.

(1) Mr. Nixon felt that the story, critical of the Administration, should never have been published. Such an attitude would be quite proper in the type of government which flourishes on the China mainland. It would be quite proper on Formosa, for General Chiang does not lightly tolerate criticism. But it is astonishing that Mr. Nixon should think that this is the proper attitude in the United States. The lifeblood of a democracy is vigorous debate, free clash of opinion and public discussion of major issues. This is the check which a democracy has against the abuse of power by those in power, and it must never be surrendered.

(2) Mr. Nixon imputed sinister motives to those with whom the story originated. A "subordinate,"

in the State Department was sabotaging Mr. Dulles. The implication is that everyone in the State Department must think alike, and that failure to agree with Mr. Dulles is tantamount to disloyalty, particularly if that disagreement is aired. Once again, this would be acceptable doctrine in Peiping or Moscow, but we must guard against the day that it ever becomes acceptable doctrine in Washington.

(3) Not only did Mr. Nixon have harsh words for newspapers that print such stories, and government officials who allow such "facts" to become public property, but also he indicated the irrelevance of public opinion to the formation of public policy. From the assumption that information about critical public reaction was "sabotage," Mr. Nixon went on to draw the illogical conclusion that such news was an attempt to make public opinion "*the* decisive factor in determining the course of policy" (*italics added*).

This does nothing but raise a smoke screen in front of the real issues. No one anywhere had suggested that "public polls" ought to be *the* decisive factor in determining public policy. But Mr. Nixon's statement is calculated to suggest that disagreement with present U.S. foreign policy is playing right into the hands of the Kremlin. This is a dangerous *non sequitur*. In place of Mr. Nixon's contention that expression of critical opinion equals aid and comfort to the enemy, we must substitute the proper contention that the failure of a democracy to express itself equals the surest way to become like the enemy.

(4) But there is a yet further dimension to Mr. Nixon's dismissal of the right people in a democracy to protest what their elected officials are doing. For those in office remain responsible to those who have elected them, and as long as we continue to have a democracy, they are forced to abide by majority decision, and surrender office if not re-elected. It is quite true that public officials must do more than keep their ears to the ground and reflect the "popular" point of view. But to imply that the *only* alternative to moving ahead regardless of public opinion is to be totally bound by it and to decide issues by the "weight of the mail rather than the weight of the evidence" is to present the American public with a pair of false alternatives. It suggests that in 1958 responsible democracy consists in letting Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles do whatever they please. This is the conclusion to which Mr. Nixon's argument leads, and it must be resisted to the full.

R. M. B.



# Christianity Today: An Appraisal

FRANK W. PRICE

CONGRATULATIONS ARE being offered to *Christianity Today* upon the second anniversary of its founding. This seems an opportune time to appraise the character and influence of what is advertised as "the fastest growing magazine of Christian leadership in America."

Circulation figures for the young "fortnightly of evangelical conviction" are impressive. The management reports 43,000 paid subscriptions in 1957, no mean achievement in so short a period, and a subsidized subscription list, called "controlled circulation," that fluctuates from 120,000 to 130,000. In other words, three out of every four copies are mailed out free. The paid circulation is slightly larger than that of *The Christian Century*, *Pulpit Digest* and *Eternity* but does not compare with *The Christian Herald* (over 400,000) or *Presbyterian Life* (over one million). The editors are careful to say that *Christianity Today* stands first among international and supra-denominational journals "directed to the Protestant ministry." Many persons can bear witness to the persistence with which this periodical visits clergymen of all church groups and discovers quickly any change of address.

Generous financial backing and a vigorous editorial policy are already reaping big dividends. *Christianity Today* recently asked an independent research corporation to conduct a representative survey of what Protestant ministers read and, with no diffidence at all, they publicized the results. Of the clergymen interviewed in the sample poll, 46 per cent said that they read *Christianity Today* regularly, 35 per cent said that they read it occasionally. According to the survey, "Almost one minister in three says he has a paid subscription to *Christianity Today*; this is a higher subscription rate than any of the ten other publications tested." (The *Yearbook of American Churches* for 1958 reports 214,000 Protestant pastors with charges.)

What kind of journal is this and why has it made such a mark on the religious life of America in its short history? It attracts a large segment of American church leadership because it is a voice that this segment wants to hear, a conservative voice for "historical and evangelical Christianity." No wise observer will underestimate the extent

and influence of this conservative element in American Christianity, an element found more or less in all denominations.

The trend that *Christianity Today* reflects is far removed from the obscurantist fundamentalism of the Nineteen Twenties and the fanatical tirades today of Carl McIntyre and Edgar Bundy. "Conservative" and "evangelical" are terms that this camp prefers and pre-empts, rather than "neo-fundamentalist." They criticize sharply the narrow, anti-intellectual and bigoted temper of the old fundamentalism, and aim to establish resurgent theological conservatism as a positive, constructive creed marked by respectable scholarship and irenic spirit.

*Christianity Today* could not be an effective organ of this "vigorous evangelical affirmation" and win a respectful hearing for it unless it were also a well-edited journal, which it is. A year of thorough planning preceded the publication of the first issue. Adequate financial resources were secured; it is no secret that J. Howard Pew, wealthy industrialist of Philadelphia, is one of the main sponsors and supporters. (Mr. Pew is well-known for his protests against certain statements made by the National Council of Churches.) Headquarters were set up in Washington, D.C., "symbol of the place of evangelical witness in the life of the Republic." No expense was spared.

## Conservative Content and Evangelical Concern

The board of contributing editors contains fifty men, from center to right in theology and evangelism, including some outstanding names. In order to broaden the appeal of the magazine, arrangements were made for a wide variety of articles and a larger number of departments and features than one religious periodical usually carries.

The most astute move of the organizers was their choice of an editor-in-chief: the eminent, conservative theologian and Baptist minister, Carl F. H. Henry, who holds a Th.D. from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Boston University. Author of many scholarly books, including *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, he came to the journal from a professorship in Fuller Theological Seminary.

Mr. Price, author of the recently published *Marx Meets Christ*, is director of the Missionary Research Library in New York City.

It is fortunate for *Christianity Today* that Dr. Henry, and not some of the early promoters, is setting the editorial policy. He states his objective as "true ecumenicity," and while a redoubtable foe of modernism he does not engage in smear attacks on individuals or become entangled in controversies within or between denominations as such. He holds steadily to the main issues of the conservative-liberal debate, which cuts across denominational lines. In his wide-ranging editorials he shows much familiarity with current thought, solid theological learning, profound convictions on "revealed religion" and other subjects, a social philosophy that is a mixture of conservatism and liberalism, and a writing style that is rich and forceful, though at times rather rhetorical.

The contributed articles express a considerable variety of opinion—within definite limits. The general pattern, however, is clear: conservative content and evangelical concern. This satisfies a large body of "evangelicals": others feel that there is too much rigidity and not enough open-mindedness to new light and new interpretations. *Christianity Today* is definitely under fire from two sides. The correspondence page reflects an interesting and variegated cross-section of religious opinion.

How is the conservative-evangelical theme of the magazine articulated with reference to particular questions of Christian theology and action? The authority of biblical revelation is given a central position, as would be expected, and it is contrasted again and again with mere human reason. Professor John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia contributed an article strongly defending verbal inspiration and infallibility, but most of the writers, along with Dr. Henry, have qualified views of inspiration that exclude "verbatim reporting," recognize the "cultural milieu" in which the Scriptures were first written, and emphasize the necessity of "devout, critical biblical scholarship." "Are we obscurantists?" asks one writer and answers with a resounding "No."

Various contributors disclaim "slavish literalism" and yet they are not ready to accept neo-orthodox views of biblical realism and inspiredness of the Scriptures combined with use of some modern critical conclusions. If the Bible is a complete and unique divine revelation, it must *ipso facto* be free from all error—this is the argument. "Supernatural" is a word that *Christianity Today* uses as a hallmark of its own biblical or-

thodoxy. Studies covering about one-half of the books of the Bible have appeared; opinions on authorship, background, date, etc. typify the old school (for example, Moses is the author of Leviticus and Isaiah comes from a single pen). The Dead Sea Scrolls are welcomed as confirming conservative biblical scholarship.

*Christianity Today*, it seems, prefers the King James Version. One writer elaborated on the "majestic music of the KJV" and the "overpopulation of inferior species of translations." Appraisals of the RSV are quite critical. The conclusion is that a mild revision of the KJV would be most satisfactory. Yet the magazine has also published an able article by Eugene Nida of the American Bible Society in which he answers objections to the continuous improvement of translations in all languages. Some who argue most for literal inerrancy, he said, cling most tenaciously to traditional and inaccurate translations.

### "Zealously Anti-Modernist"

On the whole *Christianity Today* does not come to real grips with modern biblical scholarship. Nor, in spite of a few good sermons, does it present the message of the revealed Word with unusual or distinctive freshness and power. The theology of *Christianity Today* is zealously anti-modernist, battling against any dilution of the Gospel, any relativism in doctrine, any synthesis with current philosophies. The magazine asserts that changing ideas must be met with intelligent argument and coherent speech while holding tenaciously to the historic convictions of the Christian faith against all compromise or "creedal vagrancy." "Back to Luther and the Reformers" is the watchword. Some writers call for a return to Jonathan Edwards and his "still angry God."

Many of us believe in what are called the basic doctrines of Christianity and above all in Christ as Savior and Lord, but we do so without insistence on the particular theories or formulas or phrases demanded by this conservative school. There could often be a closer agreement on the dynamic truth behind the limited language than on words themselves, and yet many contributors to the new periodical are afraid of this very thing—tampering with words. The result is a distortion, or even caricature at times, of the best liberal theology, particularly noticeable in "Theological Climate in America" by G. B. Wurth of Holland. The fear of new language explains in part the bitter animus of the new journal toward Harry Emerson Fosdick, Nels Ferré, Paul Tillich and

others. Disagreement, yes, but could there not be some appreciation of the sincerity of such great minds and spirits, the stimulus that they have given to Christian thought, and the permanent values in their life and work?

In a series of articles, "Dare We Revive the Modernist-Fundamentalist Conflict?," the editor-in-chief pictured the bankruptcy of outworn fundamentalism, its reactionary philosophy and its loveless temperament. He condemns both the extreme right and left: "If modernism stands discredited as a perversion of scriptural theology, certainly fundamentalism . . . stands discredited as a perversion of the theological spirit." Dr. Henry will have nothing to do with abusive denunciations and calls the *Christian Beacon*, "a religious smear sheet in the worst traditions of yellow journalism." He pleads for more evangelical scholars and for reasonable theological conversations, conversations that he thinks would be most profitable if modernists were "genuinely historical and scientific" and if evangelicals were "radically and consistently biblical." Does he mean that both groups have something vital to give to Christianity as a whole?

### Evangelism, Ecumenism and Missions

The journal's appeal is weakened, I believe, by its narrowing of evangelism to certain types of preaching and certain forms of the message. An extravagant amount of space is given to Billy Graham and his crusades. Granting that Dr. Graham is a spectacular evangelist to the masses, used by God to help many people and to reinvigorate many churches, it seems strange that other gifted evangelists and other movements for communicating the Gospel are hardly mentioned. *Christianity Today* has become a powerful advertising medium for Billy Graham and a champion of his way of preaching, based upon his view of the Bible. "Chuck" Templeton's recent book on evangelism was met by a harsh review and his subsequent leaving of the ministry was noted with more uncharitable pleasure than Christian sorrow. Surely the time has come for all groups to stress evangelism in its universal and radical aspects, free from disputes about personalities, sponsorship and publicity methods. We need a variety of evangelistic approaches and thousands of great evangelists, both ministerial and lay.

The call of *Christianity Today* for a more earnest and effective evangelism strikes a responsive chord everywhere. I believe that the editors would agree with Nels Ferré's statement (although not with much of his theology) that "we must have indispensably a new, sweeping Christian revival

which is bigger than the old conversionism and deeper than the old social gospelism." Perhaps the evangelistic mission of the Church in a non-Christian world will help to draw all schools of theology closer together.

In general, the journal seems to favor a continuance of the *status quo* in church divisions rather than any active movement toward organic union or ecumenical unity, which it fears will lead inevitably to mere bigness and concentration of power. The editors have balanced the "perils of independency" with the "perils of ecumenicity." True ecumenism can come only with doctrinal unity ("which the World Council lacks"), on the basis of spiritual oneness, without any central control. They published a sermon by Charles Hodge (1866) on "The Unity of the Church," that expressed some high ideals but was not too relevant to the critical issues in inter-church cooperation today.

The National and the World Councils of Churches, and especially the proposed merger of the latter with the International Missionary Council, come in for some severe criticism. Reports on WCC-IMC integration and on the relation of the Orthodox churches to the World Council show a lack of complete information and are definitely one-sided. In one editorial on "Theology, Evangelism, Ecumenism," Dr. Henry declared that Billy Graham and his message constitute the main "divide"; yet we know that Dr. Graham is willing to cooperate with all Protestant groups without sacrificing his evangelical convictions.

The magazine is a good source for information on missions outside the ecumenical movement. But *Christianity Today* is away off base when it dogmatically asserts that partnership and mission-church integration — a policy of many mission boards for a century — has hindered the growth of "younger churches." I was puzzled by an editorial, "Whither Ecumenical Missions?," apparently directed against the new missionary organization of the United Presbyterian Church. The foreign missionary and the national missionary must work hand in hand. *Christianity Today's* interest is more with the foreign missionary.

### God and Free Enterprise

As the editors look out upon America and the world scene they cherish no sentimental illusions. They are realistic in their interpretations. America is morally and spiritually second-rate. Western civilization is post-Christian and in many ways pagan. The revival we look and pray for has hardly begun. Communism is stabbing us awake. "Christ crucified" is the sure answer to the world's tragedy and need.

On particular social, political and international problems their position may be stated as follows: for strong armed defense; against cessation of nuclear tests; against recognition of Communist China and any attempt to communicate with the Christian Church on the mainland; against world gov-



ernment in any form; for firm support of Israel (on practical and biblical grounds); lukewarm toward the United Nations; for expulsion of Hungary from the U.N.; against racial discrimination within the Church; for general desegregation if it can be accomplished without force; against church-lobbying in Washington; against the "big stick" in labor unions and for right-to-work laws; against official pronouncements by church bodies on social questions; against the foundations' "tilt to the left"; strongly against socialism and welfare-state programs and for a capitalist economy as biblical, Protestant and Calvinistic; critical of Dewey's influence on education. The magazine has taken a commendably vigorous stand against "sex and smut on the newsstands," organized gambling and the alcohol evil. (It apologized for inadvertently printing one hotel advertisement that mentioned a cocktail lounge!) Prof. Roland H. Bainton of Yale contributed an excellent article on total abstinence.

Samuel Shoemaker wrote one of the best articles that I have read in the magazine on "Faith, the Foundation of Freedom." The editors go further in insisting upon the interdependence of religious and economic freedoms. Illustrative of their philosophy is this statement: "An inner logic has bound the traditions of theology and free enterprise... Free enterprise belongs under the living God." "Christian economics" begins, they declare, "with God and ends with free man." This opens up a large area for debate.

In one poll of ministers, 61 per cent of those surveyed favored federal housing. One out of five Protestant ministers, the editors conclude, is decidedly socialistic, and this constitutes a grave threat to religious freedom in America. The same survey, however, gave comfort to *Christianity Today* in showing that three out of four Protestant ministers are conservative rather than neo-orthodox or liberal in their theology.

*Christianity Today* says little about other religious periodicals. However, on the occasion of *The Christian Century's* fiftieth anniversary it extended congratulations to a magazine "of long history and editorial keenness." It did not see any "change of heart" in the new format of *The Christian Century*, but only the same "assault on what the Bible says and confidence in what the *Century* says," together with the old "professed devotion to inclusive ecumenism." This may discourage *The Christian Century* from any genuine conversations; yet there are some who hope for an enlightening debate on great theological and ecumenical issues by these two outstanding and widely read Protestant journals.

As for me, I shall continue to read *Christianity Today* for its able and spirited defense of one important stream of historical Christianity and for its evangelical dedication. And I shall continue to read *The Christian Century* and *Christianity and Crisis* for their penetrating observations, their support of great causes, their skillful writing and their fearless thrusts toward the frontiers of Christian thought and action.

### A Catholic View of Mr. Blanshard and Mr. Lowell

TO THE EDITORS: It is depressing to read the letters from Paul Blanshard and C. Stanley Lowell in the Oct. 13 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*. They give further evidence of the remarkable inability of either writer even to glimpse the realities of Catholicism in the modern world. These realities, as John C. Bennett has observed, are complex and, in many areas, evolving. But, whatever may be the evidence to the contrary, Mr. Blanshard and Mr. Lowell insist that "the Roman Church" is simple and forever frozen in some medieval mold.

I am not hopeful that anything I, or any other Catholic, might say would bring them to a wider vision of Catholicism. Those who see it as authoritarianism pure and simple, a monolithic conspiracy against the "American way of life," are frozen in their mold. But for the sake of the readers of *Christianity and Crisis*, I think some Catholic comment on these letters should be made.

The point I would make is general. But I must also point out several of the more outrageous inaccuracies in both letters.

Item: In writing on the Catholic position on birth control, Mr. Blanshard states: "No Catholic is allowed to vote against the Pope's moral judgment in the matter, e.g., by voting for permissive birth control in Massachusetts, without being branded a mortal sinner."

This statement is so confused as to be meaningless. A Catholic freely accepts the authority of the Church in a carefully limited, clearly defined area of faith and morals. Consequently—and rather obviously—so long as he chooses to remain in the Church he accepts the Church's teaching on birth control. But this does not mean that he accepts, or need accept, the wisdom of any particular civil law in the secular society. While fully accepting the Church's teaching authority, he may still oppose a particular law as an injudicious, and in some instances unjust, extension of that authority into the realm of Caesar. So in Massachusetts, many Catholics, in good conscience, would reject the anti-birth control statute, not because they question the Church's teaching that artificial birth control is immoral, but because they think the Massachusetts law is a bad law. (On this basis, I would certainly vote against it were I a resident of Massachusetts, and I would do so with no fear of being branded "a mortal sinner." Because, as one American Catholic theologian has recently written: "Much must be tolerated by the commonwealth which in the rigor of ethics cannot be condoned.")

Item: Mr. Lowell claims that Cardinal Ottaviani's 1953 defense of the "traditional" Catholic Church-State position was "approved" by the Pope as "unexceptionable." He further states that "if" (as Dr. Bennett wrote) the Pope once made a speech

which "in vague language seems to approve 'the American view,'" the Pope's pronouncement, "if any such pronouncement exists... must appear rather emaciated when contrasted with the overwhelming evidence of pronouncements on the other side."

These are startling observations. The late Pope himself never made any comment on Cardinal Ottaviani's address. Someone in "The Vatican," who has never been identified, made a statement that, while the Ottaviani position was "neither official nor semi-official" it was, nevertheless, "unexceptionable." And the "vague" papal pronouncement that Mr. Lowell seems to doubt was ever made was, in fact, a major—some think historic—allocution, delivered in 1953 to an audience of Italian jurists, in which Pope Pius XII laid down the principle that "in the interest of a higher and broader good, it is justifiable not to impede error by state laws and coercive measures." It remains true, Pius declared, that error has no rights "objectively," but "the duty to repress religious and moral deviation cannot be an ultimate norm for action. It must be subjected to higher and more general norms." Many Catholics in the West interpreted this principle, clearly stated by the Pope, as "officially" opening the way for the formulation of a new Catholic position on Church-State relations.

Item: Mr. Lowell believes that "while it is nice [sic] that Fr. John Courtney Murray holds 'liberal views,' the fact is that they have never gained any official recognition at the Vatican. Unfortunately, Fr. Murray speaks for no one, not even himself."

Comment on this seems unnecessary in view of Pius XII's pronouncement to the Italian jurists. One can only observe that it would be "nice" if Mr. Lowell had paid at least as much attention to the official papal address that undercut his view of Catholicism as he did to "the neither official nor semi-official" speech that supported it.

But of course he did not. And here we see the reason why most Catholics despair of any rational discussion with those who hold his views, particularly with supporters of Protestants and Other Americans United. As I observed before, they will *insist* that the Catholic Church is a simple, forever frozen authoritarian phenomenon, incapable of historic adaptation or self-criticism, no matter

how impressive the evidence to the contrary may be. The historic ferment and developments in modern Catholic thought are dismissed (if anything is known about them) as atypical or even hypocritical. For how could it be otherwise in a Church that is "monolithic"? Period.

... But though the Church has a life that is beyond history, it also moves in history and here it learns, adapts, changes. It is not the simple, mechanical "power" that some of its critics fear. The Church is living, not dead.

At the beginning of his century a great Roman Pontiff, Leo XIII, wrote: "It is the special property of human institutions and laws that there is nothing in them so holy and salutary but that custom may alter it, or overthrow it, or social habits bring it to naught. So in the Church of God, in which changeableness of discipline is joined with absolute immutability of doctrine, it happens not rarely that things which were once relevant or suitable become in the course of time out of date, or useless, or even harmful."

Here was as "official" an observation as any Mr. Blanshard or Mr. Lowell could desire. And, in its spirit, the process of separating out those things that are essential from those that are unessential, of re-evaluating those things which, in the course of time, may have become useless or even harmful, will continue in the Catholic community during the reign of a new Pope. While it proceeds, Catholics will hope for patience and some intelligent understanding from those not of the household of their faith.

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FRANK W. PRICE